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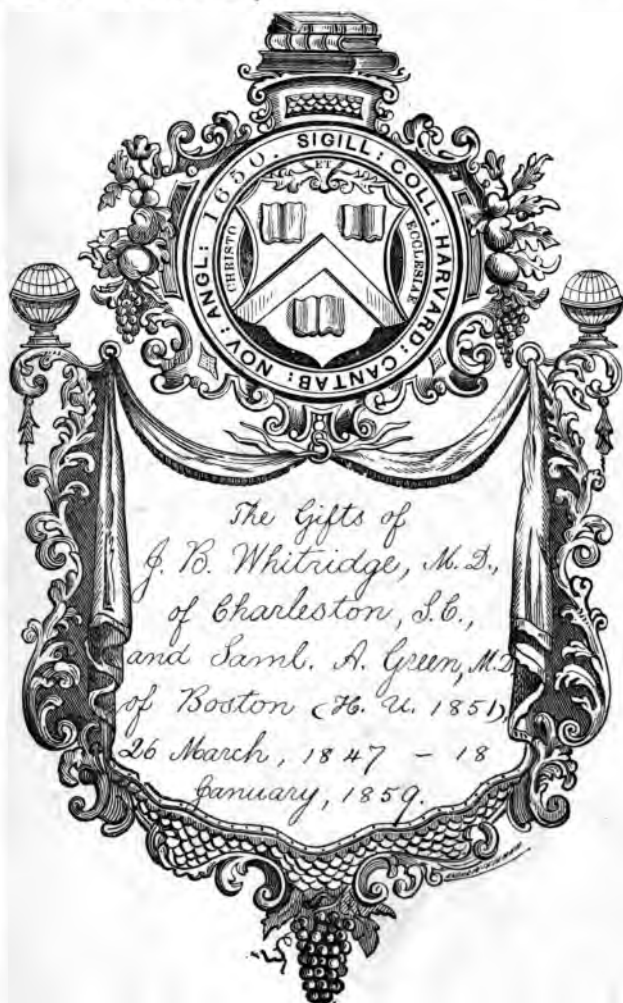
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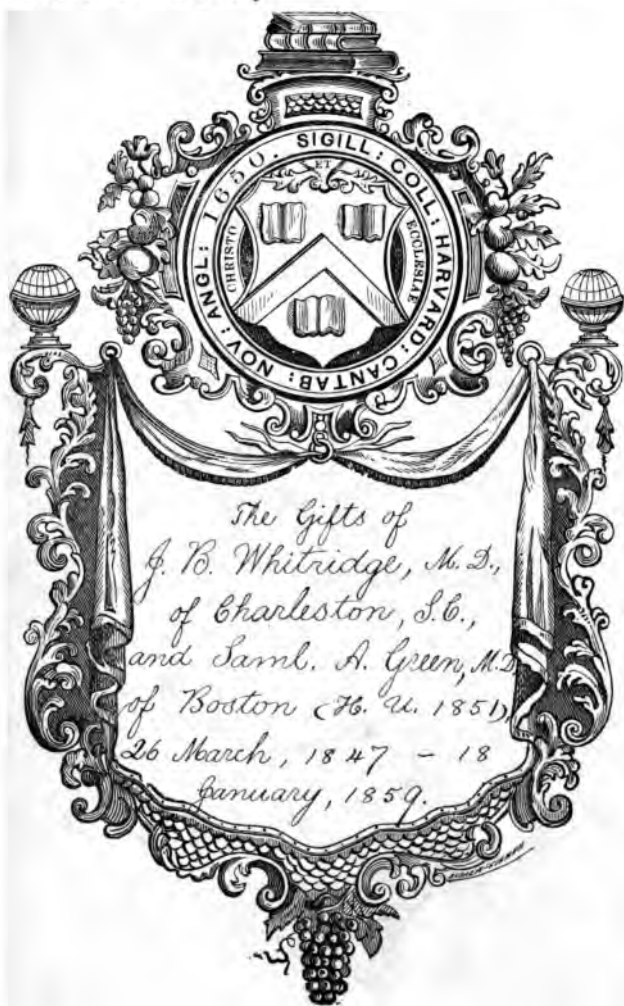
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REMARKS

ADDRESSED TO

THE CITIZENS OF CHARLESTON,

ON THE

SUBJECT OF INTERMENTS,

AND THE

POLICY OF ESTABLISHING

A PUBLIC CEMETERY,

BEYOND

THE PRECINCTS OF THE CITY.

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*Henry*  
By H. L. PINCKNEY, Mayor.

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CHARLESTON:

PRINTED BY W. RILEY, 41 BROAD-STREET.

1839.

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to the  
Gift of J B Whitledge, Jr.  
of Charleston, S.C.

## REMARKS, &c.

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FELLOW-CITIZENS,—

On the 5th of November last, I had the honor to submit to Council, a report in relation to my proceedings for the relief of the sick poor, and on various subjects pertaining to the public health. In the part of that document in which I adverted to the *natural* causes of the late epidemic, I noticed, amongst others, the existing condition of our grave yards, as having contributed probably to produce, and certainly to diffuse and protract it. The views which I presented, in support of those positions, were not only corroborated by facts, shewing that animal putrefaction is a most powerful and prolific source of malignant maladies, but by the general history of interments, and the convincing testimony of experience. Equally to my astonishment and regret, however, these positions, sustained as they are by universal opinion, and the highest medical authority, have been controverted by a writer in the *Courier*, over the signature of "R." As the essay of this writer is plausible in its reasoning, and apparently fortified by specious references to authority, and therefore tends to mislead the public mind upon a subject of vital importance to the public welfare, I deem it my duty, as

an officer specially charged with the conservation of the public health, to address the community at large on the subject of city interments, in order that the people may decide, calmly and dispassionately, and after a full investigation of the merits of the question, whether or not they ought to be abolished, and a public cemetery established at some little distance from the city.

In doing this, I shall first examine the arguments of "R.," and endeavour to show that they are utterly untenable.

I shall then exhibit a brief history of interments, showing that from the remotest antiquity, and for upwards of five centuries after the introduction of Christianity, the practice prevailed, in all nations, of burying their dead beyond the precincts of their cities.

I shall then show that this practice prevailed, in consequence of a deep-rooted conviction that the exhalations from grave yards are injurious to health.

I shall then show that this conviction is supported by numerous and appalling facts.

I shall then show that it is also sustained by the concurrent opinion of the medical profession.

I shall then show that the practice of city interments, in consequence of strong remonstrances against it by medical men, has been abolished in many portions of the old world.

I shall then show that it has also been abolished in South America, and in various parts of the United States.

I shall then endeavour to demonstrate that this wise and sanitary policy, so generally adopted elsewhere, ought to be imitated by the citizens of Charleston.

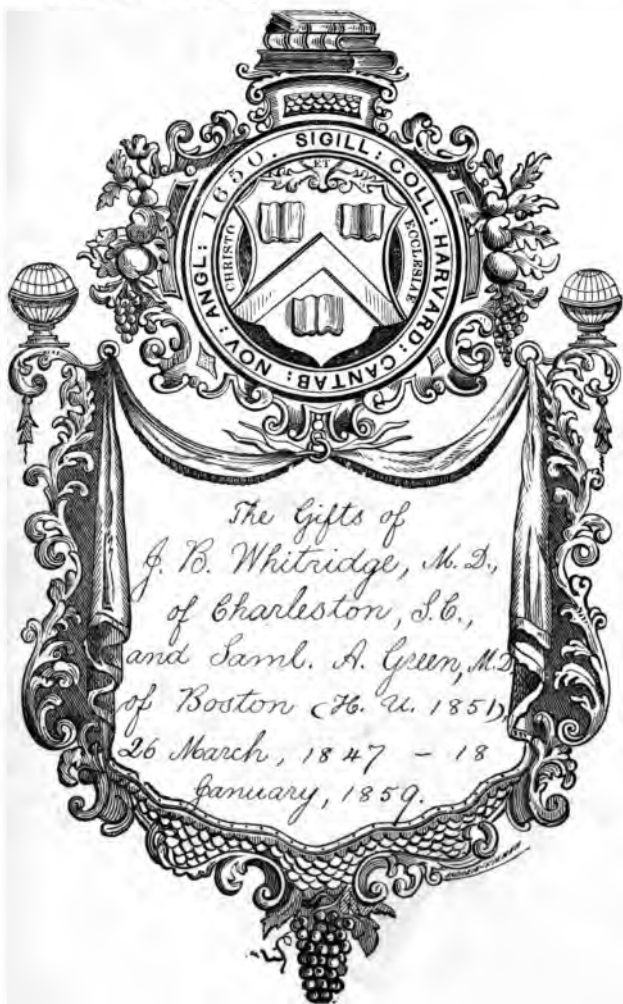
And finally, that city interments ought not only to be abolished, with a view to the public health, but that even as regards the repose of the dead, and the cul-

tivation of moral and religious principles in the living, a public cemetery, rurally situated and tastefully arranged, would possess a vast superiority over the numerous, desecrated, and unsightly grave yards, which now occupy and deform so many portions of our city.

Before I proceed to the essay of "R.," however, it is proper to state, that I have never contended that the recent epidemic originated exclusively in animal putrefaction. The positions which I assumed, were these: that the disease was mainly attributable to heat and moisture; that intense and long continued heat, accompanied by frequent rains, operated upon a vast variety of matter, subject to decomposition; and that this variety of matter, rendered putrescent by the united action of the sun and rain, emitted a combination of fœtid vapours, or noxious gasses, which, by mingling with the atmosphere, thoroughly corrupted it, and thus gave rise to that desolating malady. The variety of matter alluded to, included every thing subject to putrescence, in low lots and drains; in vaults and cellars; in yards, gardens and grave yards. I do not believe that any one of these causes alone produced the epidemic; but I sincerely believe that it was owing to their combination; that, without such combination, it would not have existed; and that the grave yards were more instrumental in diffusing it than any other cause. The great object at which I aim, therefore, is to destroy this combination, by cutting off as many heads as possible of this fatal hydra. For this purpose I am earnestly endeavoring to drain and fill up low lots, and so to confine the noxious vapors of the drains, as to prevent their transpiration and mixture with the atmosphere; and I have recommended to Council to prohibit in future the construction of cellars, and the

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the people of Paris differ decidedly from the "high authorities" of the anatomical amphitheatres, as to the safety of animal putrescence, or the healthy influences of corrupted air. They endeavored to get rid of the dead bodies as speedily as possible. They disposed of them all in the best manner that they could. They put some of them in the Morgue, the place in which dead bodies, picked up in the streets or rivers, are always deposited, in order that they may be recognized by their friends, taken away, and buried. They put others under the Pont Notre Dame, where, of course, they were immediately carried off by the water, and effectually prevented from doing any harm. They buried others again "in deep pits," which was the very best way, that the circumstances of the case admitted, to suppress the effluvia that might otherwise have spread desolation through the neighborhood. They had no idea of "the odorous air of a dissecting room." They had no desire to try, whether, by inhaling an infected atmosphere, and running the hazard of a plague, they could not guard themselves "against the attacks of other epidemics or disorders." But, says "R." "no injurious consequences followed from this proceeding." And why not! Because there was no danger of infection! No: but, evidently, because the "proceeding" itself, was the best calculated to avert it. The people did all in their power to prevent infection, and fortunately they succeeded. The removal and burial of the dead prevented that thorough corruption of the atmosphere, which would otherwise have taken place, and doubtless saved the city from a most desolating plague. But, even admitting that the dead bodies had been exposed for a sufficient length of time to have produced disease, and yet that

no evil consequences followed, this by no means proves that animal putrescence is not injurious to health. It only proves, on the contrary, that a cause of disease may exist, without producing the effect it is calculated to produce. And this we know is not unfrequently the case. How often does it happen, that men inhale an infected atmosphere without imbibing the infection, or come in contact with contagious diseases, without being affected by them! How often has it happened, that all the causes, to which the yellow fever is ascribed by our medical practitioners, have been in full and continued operation here, and yet that the very seasons, when every one expected a raging epidemic, have been signally marked by exemption from disease! But what does all this prove! That contagious diseases are not contagious, or that a corrupted atmosphere is not corrupt, or that the well known causes of malignant fevers cannot produce them! Unquestionably not. It only proves, as regards the atmosphere, either that there were no suitable subjects for its influence, or that the causes of disease were powerfully counteracted by other and sanitary agents, and thus prevented from producing their effect. It only proves, as regards contagion, that all men are not equally susceptible, and that some may imbibe with impunity the miasm of a malady, which would cause death to others. As some men are rendered insusceptible of infection by particular constitutions and habits calculated to resist it, so we all know that other men, unfortunately, are rendered peculiarly liable to its influence, by constitutions and habits calculated to invite it. As regards yellow fever here, for instance, there is all the difference in the world, between a resident adult of a good constitution, and a regular

and temperate course of life, and a stranger, unaccustomed to our climate, and whose system is relaxed by vice and dissipation. The argument of "R.," therefore, certainly does not disprove either the tendency or capacity of animal putrescence to create disease. I shall adduce abundant evidence, on the contrary, to demonstrate *that it is a source of malignant maladies*, and that it has often produced catastrophes of a most fearful and appalling character. I would here observe, also, that whilst he cites the interested opinions of a few French anatomists, I rely upon the authority of the medical profession every where ; and that whilst he quotes an instance, in which the hand of an operator was cut by a dissecting knife without producing *pustula maligna*, (though numerous instances are on record, in which the transfusion of putrid matter, in that way, into the veins of dissectors, has caused their deaths,) I rely upon the equally conclusive and important fact, that, in consequence of repeated epidemics in France, and the repeated and urgent representations to the government, by the Medical Faculty, that they all originated in animal putrefaction in Church Yards or Churches, interments have been formally and forever abolished in all the Cities of that great and enlightened Empire. Here then we have, on the one side, positive and unquestionable facts, the authority of eminent and patriotic men, the action of the government, and the universal opinion of the people ; and, on the other, mere theoretical speculation, bottomed on the interested testimony of a few individuals, and the negative character of a few unimportant incidents. The people will determine which of these sides is strongest.

But "R.," not content with asserting the harmless-

ness of putrefaction, actually insists that grave yards are beneficial to the public health; and in support of this extraordinary doctrine, he assigns, as a reason, that "they act as public squares, and prevent the city from being too closely built up." Now this position certainly cannot bear examination. What! grave yards conducive to the public health! Grave yards, filled with decayed and putrefying bodies—filled with vaults and sepulchres, the atmosphere of which no man can breathe, but at the imminent peril of his life—always moist, and frequently for days together immersed in water—abounding in long rank grass and noxious weeds, the exhalations from which are sufficient of themselves to create infection—consisting of a porous soil, through which miasmata ascend, poisoning the atmosphere we breathe, and in which miasmata mix with the earth, and thus affect our wells, poisoning the water that we drink—and all this represented to be healthy! Surely "R." is not in earnest. If grave yards were kept constantly clean and dry: if they had no deleterious matter in them, and were so arranged and decorated as to gratify the eye: they might then be regarded as public squares, and would afford no inconsiderable benefit to the people, by promoting the ventilation of the city, and furnishing places of healthful recreation. But they certainly never can be so considered, with any reason or propriety, as long as they continue sources of infection, poisoning the air they contribute to disseminate. As to the idea that they operate beneficially "by preventing the city from being too closely built up," it is sufficient to reply, that this city never can, or will be "too closely built up," because, supposing the church yards to be occupied by houses, (which, however, is extremely problematical,) there would

necessarily be space enough between them to admit a general circulation of the air. But, even were it otherwise, it would be much better, in every point of view, that they should be built up closely, than that they should continue, as they now are, offensive to the sight, offensive to the smell, abounding with miasmata of the most fatal kind, and forming, in conjunction with other agents of a similar character, prolific sources of corruption, and generators of disease.

And here I may be permitted to ask, why does "R." oppose the abolition of interments in the city? Does he really believe that no exhalations arise from animal putrefaction, or that, if they do, they inflict no injury on the public health? If he does, is it not incumbent on him to tell us what are the causes of yellow fever? It is a remarkable fact, that this disorder only prevails in Charleston, and has never been known in the interior of the State. How is this singularity to be explained? I ascribe it to the exhalations from grave yards, mingling with malaria from other sources, and thus creating a degree of corruption in the atmosphere, which the malaria from other sources, without the co-operation of the grave yards, would not be able to produce. If this union of miasmata, of different kinds, and from various causes, is not the true origin of the disease, what is it? If the emanations from grave yards have no agency in producing it, what kind of miasm, or combination of miasms, does produce it? Let the public be enlightened! Let us not grope on forever in ignorance and darkness. Let us not vainly contend against shadows, whilst death is stalking unresistedly amongst us. Let us know what is the real origin of the late dreadful epidemic, that we may attack it at its source, and, with the blessing of Heaven, avert its ravages in future. He

who makes this discovery, will be a public benefactor. Popular gratitude will attend him, whilst he lives, and consecrate his memory when dead. But, until this important revelation shall be made, "R." must not be astonished if the public authorities should be governed by the prevailing doctrine of the medical profession, or if "the current opinion," in relation to the danger of putrescence, should remain unshaken !

I now proceed to the other topics which I proposed to treat, and shall discuss them in the order in which they are arranged.

1st. It was the custom of the ancients to bury the dead beyond the precincts of their cities. Abundant evidence of this, as regards the Jews, may be gathered from the Scriptures. Abraham purchased, at Hebron, the cave of Macphelah, which was in a field, for a burying place, that he might "bury his dead, out of his sight," and where he and his wife, and Isaac and Jacob, were subsequently buried. The body of Joseph was buried in a plot of ground in Shechem. Moses was buried in a valley in Moab. Eleazer was buried on a hill. Many other instances of a similar kind may be found in Rees' Cyclopaedia, under the title *Burial*; and under the same title it is stated in Gregory's Dictionary of Arts, that "the place of burial amongst the Jews, was in the country, upon the highways, in gardens, and upon mountains." This custom continued amongst the Jews until the latter period of their existence as a nation. Lazarus was buried at Bethany, a distance from Jerusalem. Joseph, of Arimathea, had his tomb near Golgotha, which was also the Sepulchre of our Saviour. Those who came to life at the Crucifixion, "returned to the city." The demoniac *fled into the desert, and dwelt amongst the tombs.* Dr. Rees also fur-



nishes the proofs of a similar practice amongst the Egyptians, the Persians, and the Chinese, the latter of whom have continued it uninterruptedly to the present day. Both the Greeks and the Romans erected their tombs without their cities. Amongst the Romans this custom existed long before the adoption of the law of the Twelve Tables. By that law it was solemnly enacted that no dead body should be buried or burned within the city. The laws of Solon prohibited interments within the walls of Athens, and, until the last days of that Republic, very few persons were interred within them. At Syracuse, the dead were buried without the walls, and this is said to have been the prevailing custom of almost every nation in the world.

The law of the Twelve Tables was enacted by the Decemviri, 450 years before the birth of Christ. It was incorporated with every succeeding change of the Roman Government. It was re-enacted by the Christian Emperors, rigidly put in force in every portion of the Empire, and continued in operation for upwards of a thousand years, or until the beginning of the 6th century of the Christian æra.

At that period the first innovation was made upon this long established and salutary practice. By an ecclesiastical canon, dignitaries of the church were permitted to be buried in the body of the church. Other canons, soon after, permitted the laity to be buried in church yards. Both practices rapidly gained ground amongst Christian nations, until, as far as they were concerned, the whole order of interments was reversed. Burials in churches and church yards became the prevailing mode of sepulture, and thus perfected the triumph of vanity over prudence, and of the folly of innovation over the wisdom of experience.

2. The general prohibition of interments in cities, arose from a general and well grounded conviction that grave yards are injurious to the public health. The law of the Twelve Tables directed that the dead should be removed to the highways, "to preserve the health of the citizens, and least the dead bodies should infect the city with pestiferous exhalations." Millingen, in his "Curiosities of Medical Experience," says, "from time immemorial, medical men have pointed out the dangers of burying the dead within the limits of populous cities. Impressed with this conviction, ancient legislators only allowed to the most illustrious citizens a sepulchre in the temples of the Gods." Speaking of the Romans, the same writer says—"As a prudential measure, the dead were buried beyond the walls of the towns, to prevent the fatal consequences that might have arisen from extensive putrefaction and infection." Other authorities might easily be quoted to the same effect.

3. This conviction, (of the evil consequences of animal putrefaction,) is sustained by facts of the most alarming character. Millingen says, "The early Christians inhumed the bodies of their martyrs in their temples. This honor was afterwards conferred on the remains of distinguished citizens, illustrious prelates, and princes. The *infectious darcases, which at various periods arose from this custom*, induced Theodosius, in his celebrated code, strictly to prohibit it, and he even ordered that the remains of the dead, thus inhumed, should be removed out of Rome." The same writer says, "In more modern times, Theodolphus, Bishop of Orleans, complained to Charlemagne that lucre and vanity had converted churches into charnel houses, disgraceful to the clergy, and perilous to the community. It was upon his presentation

that this prince, in his Capitularies, prohibited burials in churches under heavy penalties." I am also indebted to the same source for the following well authenticated facts, which forcibly exhibit the pernicious effects of burials in churches and church yards. "In 1773, in Saulieu, Burgundy, an epidemic disease, arising from the inhumation of a corpse in the church of St. Saturnin, created considerable alarm. The body of a corpulent person had been interred on the 3d of March, and a woman was buried near it on the 20th of April following. Both had died of a reigning fever. During the last burial, a foetid effluvia arose from the vault, which pervaded the whole church, and out of one hundred and seventy persons, who were present, one hundred and forty-nine were attacked with the prevailing malady, although its progress had been arrested amongst the other inhabitants of the town. In 1774, a similar accident occurred in a village near Nantes, where several coffins were removed in a vault, to make room for the Lord of the Manor. Fifteen of the bystanders died from the emanation. In 1744, one-third of the inhabitants of Lectouse perished from a fever of a malignant character, that manifested itself after some works that required the removal of a burial ground. Two destructive epidemics swept away large proportions of the population of Riom and Ambert, two towns of Auvergne." Numerous other instances are recorded, equally circumstantial and decisive.

4. This conviction, (of the evil consequences of animal putrefaction,) is also sustained by the concurrent opinion of the medical profession. It was this prevailing opinion amongst the medical men of France, that caused the abolition of City Interments throughout that Empire. Dr. DEVEZE says, truly, "The voice

of an enlightened body of men, induced the French nation to banish burial grounds to a distance from their cities." Dr. D. resided in Philadelphia during the epidemic which raged there in the memorable and fatal summer of '93. He was Surgeon and Physician to one of the Hospitals, and afterwards became one of the Physicians to the King of France. In a pamphlet which he wrote on the causes of the epidemic, he says, "amongst the particular causes of this disease, (the yellow fever,) we may reckon Burying Grounds in the midst of a city. These places of interments are injurious from the vapours which exhale from them, and corrupt the atmosphere, and also from the miasmata which the rain water carries with it, as it filters through the earth, and passes into wells. This water must be pernicious, and should be attended to, if the dangers are to be avoided which result from it." In another place he says, "There is another cause, which in my opinion acts infinitely more on the animal economy, and that is the number of burial places in the heart of the city." Dr. PASCALIS, of New York, in a work on "The dangers of Interments in Cities," expresses the opinion decidedly, that "receptacles of the dead, in churches and church yards, are unhealthy, and often become the sources of wide spreading diseases." Dr. CHAPMAN, in a review of this work, says: "It is difficult to conceive how any member of the Medical Profession, at all gifted with feelings of humanity, should not unite with Dr. PASCALIS in reprobating the pernicious custom, and soliciting its entire abolition." Dr. HOSACK's testimony is, "that no grave yard ought to be permitted in a city under any circumstances: for such is the loose texture of the soil in grave yards, where this mode of burial is practised, that as soon

as the decomposition of the body has begun, the gases which are extricated will find egress, and mix with the atmosphere, rendering it offensive and impure, and consequently a medium of spreading contagious diseases, that may be introduced within the sphere to which such impure air may extend." Dr. PICORNEL, in his observations "On the unhealthy condition of New Orleans," says, "another source of disease in this city deserves the greatest attention—it is a grave yard, now adjoining it, and much too small for its population, considering *how greatly it contributes to the distressing mortality of its inhabitants. All the world acknowledges it to be demonstrated*, that the miasmata arising from places of interments, *may cause, and have caused, the most distressing calamities.* They not only give more intensity to existing epidemics, but they bring forth other contagious diseases, which are equally calamitous." The following extract is taken from the "Dictionaire des Sciences Medicales," a French work of high reputation and authority. "It is at this day *well known*, and has been *satisfactorily demonstrated*, that burials in cities *greatly endanger the public health*: that the miasmata disengaged from burial places may, and often have, caused frightful catastrophes, and that they not only give more virulence to prevailing maladies, but also originate contagious diseases, whose ravages have been terrible. Cemeteries should be situated, as far as localities will permit, on elevated places—at a considerable distance from the city, and to the North of the dwelling houses—so that the South wind should not pass over them, after being charged with emanations from the grave yards." This extract is the more worthy of attention, because the work, from which it is taken, is conducted by a Society of the

most eminent Physicians in Paris, and it thus affords conclusive evidence of the prevailing opinion of the Medical Profession in that city, whose medical men are acknowledged to be, at least, equal in genius and erudition, to those of any other city in the world. To the foregoing testimonials, however, authoritative as they are, it may not be improper to add others from several other sources, entitled to the highest consideration and respect. In 1807, Sir CHRISTOPHER WREN, the Architect of St. Paul's Cathedral, speaking of the rebuilding of certain churches which had been destroyed by fire, says, "*I could wish that all burials in churches should be disallowed, which are not only extremely unwholesome, but also inconvenient.*" EVELYN, in his Sylva, referring to the great fire in London, regrets "that advantage had not been taken of that calamity, to rid the city of its burial places, and to establish a necropolis without the city. Such a funeral grove, with proper regulations and careful keeping, would have been an ornament and an honour to the metropolis, and might at this time have been as characteristic of the English, as the Catacombs at Paris are of the French." In 1814, the Commissioners of Improvements reported to Parliament, "that St. Margaret's Church Yard, in Westminster, could not any longer be used for burying with safety to the public health." In a report made to the Councils of New York, (which I regret that I do not possess, but from which I have seen several extracts in an essay published in Philadelphia, under the signature of "Atticus,") it appears that the Committee dwell particularly "on the unhealthy odours and exhalations, which all physicians agree are emitted from vaults." The Committee say—"It is a common observation made by the sextons, that they dare

not descend into a vault until it has been left open for some time, and that the foul air must be allowed to escape, before it is possible to breathe the atmosphere. In a city, this exhalation is necessarily dispersed to the surrounding houses. The neighbors of Trinity Church testified, that when certain winds prevailed, in the warm season, they were obliged to keep their doors and windows closed, so very offensive was the smell from the putrescent bodies." "Atticus" says—"This same effect is experienced in more than one neighborhood in the city of Philadelphia." In the New York report, is a letter from a Mr. FISK to Dr. AKERLY, dated July, 1824, in which the writer states, that "in hot months, whenever a vault was opened in the Dutch Church Yard, near his residence, a very offensive stench was emitted from the vault: that being frequently annoyed with this nuisance, he remonstrated with the sexton on the impropriety of allowing the vault to remain open—and that the reply of the sexton was, that it would be as much as his life was worth to enter it, until it had stood open for some time to air." In addition to all this, I adduce the testimony of Professors GEDDINGS and MOULTRIE, Dr. THOMAS Y. SIMONS, Dr. WILLIAM HUME, and Dr. A. G. HOWARD, the City Inspector, all of whom are advantageously known, and highly respected as professional men, and whose opinions will be found in an Appendix, to which the reader is referred.

5. I now proceed to show, that city interments have been abolished in many portions of the old world. Millingen says—"In France, Maret in 1773, and Vicq d'Azyr in 1778, pointed out the danger of this practice in such glaring colors, that government, by an edict, only allowed church interments to certain

dignitaries; but in 1804, by a wise law, that should be enforced in every civilized country, inhumation in cities was entirely abolished." The New-York Committee say—"Three prominent and striking instances of the prohibition of city interments occur, in the city of Toulouse, by the Archbishop of that diocese: in Paris, by the Parliament of that city: and finally, in all the cities and towns in France, by the decree of Louis XV. In the Council of Prague also, burials in churches were forbidden. England has lately been awakened to the importance of this subject, and near London, Liverpool, Bristol, and many other places, rural cemeteries have rapidly gained public approbation. City interment has also been prohibited in Dublin. This regulation was enacted in 1740, after a pestilential fever in that year, and the place of burial for the inhabitants is in the neighborhood of the river Liffey, at a distance from the city. It may be added, that in Denmark, Venice, Constantinople, Vienna, and many other places in continental Europe—in Port au Prince—in the island of Ceylon—in Greenland—among the Hottentots—and also among the Indians in North America, the practice of interments in cities, and in the neighborhood of their villages, is prohibited. The Turks are extremely tenacious on this subject. The tombs of the Chinese are erected out of their cities, and almost always upon hills, covered with pines and cypress."

6. City interments have also been abolished in several parts of South America, and the United States. They have been abolished, for instance, throughout Paraguay, and in Lima and other cities of Peru. In the United States, they have been abolished in New-York, Albany, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Boston, Washington, Augusta, New-Haven, and New-Or-



leans. In New-England, it has long been the custom to have rural cemeteries, located at a distance from towns or churches: and the examples above cited have awakened public sentiment on the subject in other portions of the Union. The first example was that of New-Haven. Boston came next, with the beautiful establishment of her celebrated Mount Auburn. Philadelphia followed, with the attractive charms of Laurel Hill. After full consideration, and in consequence of a destructive epidemic in '21, New-York prohibited city burials under the severest penalties. This wise policy has since been adopted by the other cities I have mentioned.

7. And this wise policy, so generally adopted elsewhere, ought to be imitated by the citizens of Charleston. It is recommended by the history of interments, the fatal effects of putrefaction, and the admonitions of experience. It is recommended by the enlightened examples of other nations, and the principal cities of our own country. It is recommended by the prevailing opinion of the medical profession, and by all the respected clergymen and gentlemen\* who were charged with the supervision of the late Temporary Hospital. It is recommended by a just regard to the spirit of the age, and the progress of society; to the improvement of our city, and the welfare of posterity; to the protection of strangers, and the safety of our

\* The Commissioners of the Temporary Hospital consisted of the following gentlemen: Right Rev. Bishop England, Chairman. Rev. William Barnwell, Rev. Paul Trapier, Rev. Thomas Magruder, Rev. John H. Honour, Rev. Samuel Gilman, Rev. John P. O'Neill, Rev. James E. Evans, and John Clarkson, William Laval, R. W. Seymour, Bazile Lanneau, Jr., N. R. Middleton, and William Kirkwood, Esquires. The following is one of the Resolutions adopted by them:

*Resolved*, That this body (the City Council) be requested to take into consideration the propriety of establishing a Public Cemetery beyond the limits of the city, to be purchased and inclosed in the first instance at the expence of the city, and to be sold out in lots to the different religious societies, or individuals, at convenient credit, and in such portions as they may choose.

children—to the preservation of the living, and the repose of the dead.

I am aware that some prejudice exists upon this subject, and that many persons are averse to the abandonment of the cemeteries in which their ancestors and relatives are buried. It is a natural feeling, and one that is entitled to respect. I partake it strongly, and have had to struggle against it in the course I have pursued. But as it has yielded in me to a sense of duty, so I trust it will be overcome, in others, by the principle of patriotism, and a magnanimous devotion to the public good.

Additional burial grounds in the city are prohibited by law. The time must soon come, therefore, when the existing burial grounds will be so thoroughly occupied as to render them palpably injurious to the public health. They will then be abolished by common consent, but not, perhaps, until another pestilence shall have spread death and desolation in its train. As this policy, therefore, must be adopted before many years more, the sooner it is acted on, the better.

The great object of burying the dead is the protection of the living. If the present mode of sepulture is inadequate to that object, another and a safer one must be substituted in its stead. Whilst all possible respect should be paid to the memories of departed relatives and friends, every precautionary measure should also be taken to ensure their survivors against the calamitous effects that must always be produced by the exposure of animal matter to the deleterious influences of heat and moisture.

City interments have been abolished at the North. Every motive that urged the adoption of this sanitary regulation there, calls with redoubled force for its

adoption at the South. If grave yards have been ascertained to be unhealthy in the cold regions of the Union, they must be still more so in the warm climate of the South, where the putrefactive process is carried on with much greater rapidity, and where the malaria evolved is more subtle in quality, and more fatal in effect.

The average annual number of burials in Charleston is about one thousand. Can any man doubt that this is sufficient of itself to render the atmosphere unwholesome? The number of burials, during the two months of the late epidemic, was near six hundred. Can any man doubt that the interment of such a number of bodies, during the prevalence of the epidemic, heightened its intensity, and prolonged its duration: or that every successive corpse, as it was deposited in the earth, quickened the malaria, and extended the infection, by which other victims were laid in their graves!

It has been demonstrated, I think, that animal putrescence alone may be, and has been, the cause of desolating maladies. But even if this point were disputable, there can be no doubt that it does produce such effects, by its fatal co-operation with other sources of disease. True policy, therefore, unquestionably dictates, that we should endeavor to get rid of as many of these sources as we can, and particularly of the one, which is the most subtle and destructive of the whole. It is no answer to this argument, to say that pestilential diseases do not always originate in the vicinity of church yards, or that our late epidemic, for instance, "made its first appearance on East Bay." Admitting this to be true, it is well known that persons at a distance from a grave yard, may be affected by its influence, whilst

those in its immediate neighborhood escape unhurt; for as Dr. PICORNEL justly remarks, “the putrid miasmata which continually exhale from graves, *however deep they may be*, being mixed with miasmata proceeding from other causes, must render the city unhealthy, and corrupt the air through which it passes; and *this air, thus charged with vapours, must be spread abroad, and affect persons at a distance, whilst those near the cemeteries escape, from not having come into immediate contact with that air.*” Why then should we procrastinate this remedy! Our city was rapidly rising from its ashes, with renewed beauty and vigour, when the late fatal epidemic arrested its career, and clothed it in mourning and desolation. Again it has reared its head, and displayed its enterprize, and, unless again cast down by another epidemic, it now bids fair to move forward steadily in the path of improvement and prosperity, and to realize the sanguine expectations of its friends, and the high destiny which seems to have been assigned to it by nature, by becoming, emphatically, the Commercial Emporium, and the Queen City of the South. Shall these proud hopes be fulfilled or not? Shall these fair prospects of future greatness be realized, or shall we suffer them to be destroyed, through our own remissness or neglect! Shall we establish for Charleston a permanent character for healthiness, which is all important to its welfare, or shall we fold our arms in indolence, and make no effort either to elevate its character, and promote its commerce, or even to secure the lives of its inhabitants! I submit these questions to the calm consideration of the people. If it has been satisfactorily demonstrated, as I trust it has, that grave yards are injurious to the public health, why should we delay a remedy so obvious, so easy of execution,

so well adapted to common apprehension, so perfectly consonant to common sense, and above all so effectual in its operation, as the one proposed! Is it not incumbent on us, as good citizens and patriots, as christians and philanthropists, to adopt any measure of policy or foresight, by which we may avert the recurrence of pestilential maladies amongst us, and ensure to ourselves and our children, to the numerous emigrants who are seeking a settlement here, and to that posterity whose rights and interests are entrusted to our charge, the great and inestimable object of security to their lives against the assaults of pestilence, as well as the enjoyment of their civil and religious rights! But the enjoyment of the latter depends upon the attainment of the former; and whilst civil and religious rights are already guaranteed by the free and happy form of government under which we live, the security of life and health can only be effected by the wisdom, and energy, and patriotism of the people!

8. I come now to my last proposition, and that is, that independently of its necessity in relation to the public health, a public cemetery, rurally situated, and suitably embellished, is far more eligible than grave yards in the city, both as regards the sanctity and repose of the dead, and the impression of those religious feelings, which ought to be produced by places of that character. *Our city grave yards are unsightly.* The stones and monuments are generally broken, and falling about in different directions. The vaults are as revolting to the sight as they are to the smell, and the grounds are always overrun in summer with noxious and unseemly weeds. *A public cemetery, on the contrary, is a beautiful and attractive scene.* "Atticus" says of *Pere la Chaise*, near Paris—"It is

a spot just without the walls, where the ashes of Jew and Christian, Catholic and Protestant, repose in charitable vicinity. The ground is laid out with taste and elegance, diversified in position, beautified with shrubs and flowers, and appropriately adorned with monuments, some interesting from their historical recollections, some touching from the simplicity and tenderness of their inscriptions, all neat, decent, and appropriate to the solemnity of the scene." The celebrated Dr. DWIGHT says, of the Cemetery near New Haven, "It is incomparably more solemn and impressive, than any spot of the same kind within my knowledge. An exquisite taste for propriety is discovered in every thing belonging to it: exhibiting a regard for the dead, reverential but not ostentatious, and fitted to influence the views and feelings of succeeding generations." Similar remarks may be applied with justice to Mount Auburn and Laurel Hill, and to the public burial ground at Washington; the latter of which I have frequently seen, and of the two former of which I have occasionally read interesting accounts, in the newspapers, of their beautiful arrangement, and varied and affecting decorations. The New York Committee say, "The beauty of the Mohammedan burial grounds has been noticed by all travellers. The Afghans call their cemeteries the cities of the silent, and they hang garlands on the tombs, and burn incense before them, because they believe that the ghosts of the departed dwell there, and sit each at the head of his own grave, enjoying the fragrance of these offerings. The grave yards in Paraguay are so many gardens. The graves are regularly arranged and bordered with the sweetest plants and flowers, and the walks are planted with orange trees and palms. The Mora-

vians, in their missions, observe the same regularity and decency: the name which they give to a burial ground is God's ground. In many parts of Wales, the graves are carefully planted with flowers, and the beauty of this custom, anciently used both among the Greeks and Romans, is felt by all English travellers." *Our city grave yards excite little or no reverence for the dead.* So far from it, they are notoriously the frequent theatres of idle merriment, or vicious dissipation. Their location in the heart of the city, too, necessarily deprives them of the solemnity they would otherwise possess, as it is utterly impossible that they can produce any religious effect in the midst of theatres, taverns, and a hundred other places of amusement, or that men can derive any benefit from the contemplation of their memorials, surrounded by the noise, and bustle, and business of society. *A public cemetery, on the contrary, is eminently adapted to ensure the quiet of the dead, and to excite religious meditation in the living.* It will be no play ground for boys. The sleep of the grave will never be disturbed by the intrusion of noisy revellers. The monuments of departed relatives will never be crumbled by the falling ruins of a burning church. The sacred remains of the dead will never be transferred from the grave yard to the street, by the Spirit of Improvement. The dead will repose in quiet. The sanctity of man's last home will be revered. The grave yard will become, what it ought to be, a solemn object. It will become a source of useful instruction, and desirable impressions. The ground on which the visiter stands will be felt to be hallowed: and as he drops a tear to the memory of a beloved relative or friend, or strews his grave with garlands, or other tributes of affection, his thoughts will natu-

rally follow the deceased to the employments and enjoyments of another and a better world, and he will thus be induced to reflect on the shortness and vanity of human life, and the consequent necessity of a proper preparation for eternity.

Let me then hope that the policy here recommended, will be adopted by the citizens of Charleston. There are many beautiful and appropriate sites for a public cemetery in the vicinity of the city, from which a selection can easily be made. In a work of this kind, the expense attending it should not be considered for a moment, in comparison with the vast importance of the object. In all probability, however, there will be no expense whatever to the city. It is believed that any site purchased by the city, can be disposed of, in suitable divisions, and on reasonable credit, to the various religious societies amongst us. But even if no such resale can be effected, the enterprize is too important to be relinquished for the sake of money. Let us then determine to establish a public cemetery. *Let our dead be buried out of our sight.* This phrase, so full of sorrow, and so well adapted for reflection, conveys the very principle by which we should be governed, and the very feeling we should endeavour to promote. It not only expresses the profoundest grief and veneration for the dear departed, but it points out the best possible mode by which to consecrate their memories, and to cherish the feelings that hang about the tomb. When Death comes amongst us, and tears from our embrace the wife who has hung "like a jewel round our neck," or the darling child of our love, or the fond parent, or devoted friend, how naturally do we desire to deposit their remains in some deep sequestered shade, where at intervals, we can



visit the scene of their repose, and cherish the remembrance of their virtues. And when thus engaged, in that sacred solitude, in holding sweet converse with one we loved, how naturally does the same grave, which recalls the form and features of that beloved object, imprint upon our minds all the noble and generous qualities by which he was distinguished, and teach us to imitate his excellent example. And is not this precisely the effect which a public cemetery would produce? And is it not evident, therefore, that, in every point of view, relating to the living and the dead, it ought to be established!

Fellow-Citizens—I now leave this subject in your hands. I have done my duty in bringing it before you. And knowing, as I do, that I address an enlightened and patriotic people, I will only add, that whilst I should be gratified if the policy I have indicated should be sustained and carried out by public approbation, I shall acquiesce with cheerfulness in your superior judgment, should you determine that it is unnecessary to adopt it.

I am, respectfully, your fellow-citizen,  
H. L. PINCKNEY, Mayor.

## APPENDIX.

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CHARLESTON, DEC. 17, 1838.

*Hon. H. L. Pinckney, Mayor, &c.*—

Sir—In reply to your note of this date, requesting my opinion in relation to the influence of animal putrefaction and grave yards upon the public health, I have the honor to state :

1. That the concentrated effluvia from animal substances, in a state of putrefaction, often prove a source of disease.

2. That grave yards, when used to a great extent, for the purposes of interment, may co-operate with other causes in producing diseases, in a populous community.

I refrain from an expression of the facts and arguments upon which these opinions are predicated. Should you deem them important, it will afford me pleasure to lay them before you.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
E. GEDDINGS.

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CHARLESTON, DEC. 18.

*To the Hon. Henry L. Pinckney, Mayor, &c.*

Dear Sir—In reply to your interrogatory of this morning, relative to the grave yards in the city, I have to state, that notwithstanding the authority of some recent writers, that animal matter during decomposition is not a source of disease, I am of opinion, that its union with vegetable matter produces those modifications of disease which infest cities, and from which the surrounding country is exempt. Valueless as my opinion may be, when opposed to others of high authority, I have an argument to oppose to cemeteries in the city, which I trust will be valued for its novelty, as well as its immediate application to the circumstances of the city, and bearing upon a subject which truth and delicacy compel me to handle with caution. I allude to the sources of impurity in the city well water, and I announce the fact, for reasons which I shall hereafter explain, that our city well water is a strong solution of animal and vegetable matter in every process of decomposition, with its constituent salts, and as such, we drink not only the soluble filth, and excretions of men and animals, but the very mortal remains of our citizens, who are interred in the city. Disgusting as this idea may seem, and revolting to human nature as it may appear, it is nevertheless true, as I shall now proceed to demonstrate to your satisfaction.

A slight recurrence to the nature of our wells will shew, that they are excavations into the wet porous subsoil, where a reservoir of water always exists of greater or less depth, constantly sup-

plied by rains upon the surface, which dissolves the superincumbent filth, and descends into the reservoir. All vaults dug into this subsoil, penetrate this subterranean water, and are in fact analogous to wells, for they commingle their waters, and have common properties. A vault and well near to each other, obtain their supply of water from one common source, and communicate with each other, and the emptying of the well is followed by the immediate emptying of the vault; thus the water of the vault is transferred to the well by the common law of hydraulics, and carries with it the soluble contents of the vault. What obtains with one well and vault is common to all, and as the vaults have no pumps by which they can be emptied, all their water in the course of time passes into the wells, and is pumped up for use. A grave is but a shallower vault, governed by the same laws, and in many of the grave yards penetrates the reservoir, and in times of wet weather, the body is actually deposited into the water, as many of the sextons will fully corroborate. Such being the state of things, the portions of the human body which become soluble in water by putrefaction, and all the soluble gases which are engendered during putrefaction, are dissolved, and soon pass into the adjacent wells, and are consumed by the people. The quantity I admit is but small, but it is nevertheless a constituent of the dead human body, and as such is a reasonable object of disgust, and a striking objection to interments in the city.

The nauseous saltiness of some of the city wells, has been attributed to the percolation of the adjacent rivers; such I apprehend to be incorrect, on account of the impossibility of such a passage. I am inclined to trace its presence to the numerous salts which exist in the animal remains and excretions, for on calculating the quantity of common salt which is annually eliminated by 30,000 people, I find it, according to Linnings' Statistics and Berzerins' Analysis, to exceed 400,000 lbs., a quantity in addition to the excretions of horses and other animals, fully adequate to produce the observed effect. In proof of this view of the subject, I may mention the circumstances of New Orleans, situated upon the banks of a fresh water river; we can have no reason to apprehend saltiness from the river or sea, yet this city is represented, on undoubted authority, to have as bad, and as salt well water, as Charleston, while removed from the city it is perfectly pure. If we reject the view which I have taken, of the impurity of water both in New Orleans and in Charleston, we are left without a suspicion of the source of its saltiness and other impurities.

Although my reply is not confined to your question, I trust I have not exceeded my privilege; I have advanced the best argument I am possessed of, both for the abolition of interments in the city, and the introduction of pure water, both of which I conceive would be highly beneficial.

I have the honor to be,

Yours, very respectfully,

WM. HUME.

CHARLESTON, DEC. 17. 1838.

Dear Sir—I received your note, in which you request my opinion, whether animal putrefaction is not a source of disease; and whether the exhalations from grave yards, united with other causes of infection, may not produce malignant maladies or epidemics in a populous community?

In reply, I must remark, that it is a subject which has excited much attention, and in which contradictory evidences have lead (as is unfortunately too often the case in speculative opinions in medicine,) to false, in place of inductive reasoning and logical conclusions—making it a matter of doubt with some medical writers, and denied altogether by others.

There is, perhaps, nothing more difficult to account for, than the causes which produce endemic and epidemic diseases. The character of the pestilential poisons which excites disease in various forms, has eluded the researches of the philosopher and chemist. The causes which generate them are even far from being ascertained, although we have strong probabilities to regulate us. Hence it is the part of wisdom and prudence, and a rule in medical police, to remove all causes which may, by a possible contingency, create disease; and such a course is likewise in accordance with the dictates of common sense. Having made these brief preliminary remarks, I respectfully give my individual opinion and belief, that the burial of the dead among the living, is an agent, with other causes, in producing disease—and that it is a wise system of medical police, especially in warm latitudes, to have cemeteries beyond the precincts of a city.

That you may succeed, sir, in the efforts you are making to accomplish this desirable object, is my sincere wish.

I am, dear sir, with respect, yours,

THOS. Y. SIMONS, M. D.

Hon. H. L. PINCKNEY, Mayor of Charleston.

HEALTH OFFICE, DEC. 19, 1838.

Sir—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th inst. asking my opinion “whether animal putrefaction is not a source of disease? And whether the exhalations from grave yards, combined with other causes of a similar character, may not produce malignant maladies, or epidemics, in populous communities?”

In reply, I would say, that animal putrefaction, combined with other agents, and under certain atmospherical conditions have, and may give rise to epidemic diseases. In my opinion, this fact is fully susceptible of demonstration, and indeed I am under the impression, that, among medical men, it is now well established and settled. In answer to your second interrogatory, every one knows that epidemic yellow fever, is confined to cities, or densely crowded places, and if it be conceded, that the cause exists where the dis-

ease originates, it follows that we must look for it in cities, or "populous communities." What is there, then, to be found peculiar to these situations? Immense bodies of decomposed *animal matter*, evolving miasma, which in certain seasons are capable of corrupting, and do so change the general character of the atmosphere, as to render it a source of disease, almost to every one who has not been inured to it by a long residence. This seems to be the state of things in our own city, and it is my settled conviction that the fever of last season, which was more desolating in its effects than any epidemic with which Charleston has been visited heretofore, may be ascribed to this source. If this opinion be correct, it would not only be advisable to interdict burying grounds within the city, but to cut off, by a wise legislation, as far as is practicable, all other sources of a similar character.

With much esteem, your obedient servant,

A. G. HOWARD, M. D., City Inspector.

To the Hon. H. L. PINCKNEY, Mayor.

DECEMBER 21, 1838.

Dear Sir—I received your note a day or two ago asking my opinion as to the agency of animal putrefaction as a source of disease, and whether the exhalation from grave yards, united with other causes of infection, may not produce malignant maladies, or epidemics, in a populous community. I have to apologize to you for not having replied to these interrogatories before. I did not receive your note until just about the expiration of the hour, at which, judging from the tenure of the same, an answer would have been available to your purpose. Since then I have been more than usually occupied, and was in hopes of meeting you to offer you a verbal explanation. I am not aware that my opinion at this late hour would be of any consequence to you; but, ill timed as it is, I have no hesitation in declaring it. I have never doubted that animal putrefaction is a source of disease; nor that grave yards, in populous communities especially, and under the circumstances with which you have associated them, may become greatly tributary towards the origination and extension of infectious disorders. Under this conviction, and for other reasons, the most important of which have been already brought by yourself and others before the public view, I confess that I have seen with great satisfaction the movements which are making towards the removal of our cemeteries beyond the city. Hoping that your efforts to effect this very desirable object, may be crowned with success, I have the pleasure of subscribing myself,

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAS. MOULTRIE.

Hon. H. L. PINCKNEY, Mayor, &c.

ORIGINAL.

1859 (2)

©

# REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE

OF THE



CITY COUNCIL OF CHARLESTON, —

UPON

INTERMENTS WITHIN THE CITY,

AND THE

MEMORIAL

FROM

CHURCHES AND CITIZENS.

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CHARLESTON, S. C.  
WALKER, EVANS & CO. STEAM PRINTERS.  
No. 3 Broad-street.

1859.



62

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# REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE

OF THE

CITY COUNCIL OF CHARLESTON, -

S. C.

UPON

INTERMENTS WITHIN THE CITY,

AND THE

MEMORIAL

FROM

CHURCHES AND CITIZENS.

CHARLESTON, S. C  
WALKER, EVANS & CO. STEAM PRINTERS.  
No. 3 Broad-street.

1859



1859, Jan. 18,

Wright of

Sam. A. Green M. D.  
Boston.

# MEMORIAL

---

*To the Honorable the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Charleston in City Council assembled.*

*The Memorial of sundry citizens of the said City respectfully sheweth :*

That your Memorialists have observed with deep concern that there has been reported to your Honorable body "A Bill to prevent interments within the City of Charleston." The citizens of Charleston have hitherto enjoyed the privilege, inestimable to many of them, of burying their dead in the various cemeteries surrounding their respective churches and places of public worship within the city, and fondly cherished the hope and reasonably expected that their own remains would be allowed to be deposited, and to repose in the same hallowed spot with those of their own loved ones who had gone before them to the grave. To be gathered to their fathers in their old places of sepulture, has been to many of them an expectation of unspeakable comfort, in the contemplation of death, and to be dissevered from them a thought full of bitterness. The committee who reported this bill to your Honorable body, recognize the sentiment which attaches so many of your Memorialists to this usage and dear privilege, as not altogether unnatural or unworthy, but call upon them to yield up all this for the public good.

Your Memorialists are not insensible to the appeal, but cannot perceive any conclusive reason why this usage should be deemed injurious to the public health. The city of Charleston has enjoyed as great, or perhaps, a greater exemption from epidemics, in general, than many other seaports. Even the

cholera, which terrified the whole earth, was less severe in this city than in many others, and the average mortality, notwithstanding the frequent visitations of the yellow fever, has, for a long period of years, favorably contrasted with that of most other cities. Yet in all past time these cemeteries have been here in our midst, and have, by some, been even regarded as contributing to the public health, by affording a freer ventilation to our city.

The suggestion that these cemeteries are prolific sources of yellow fever, seems to your Memorialists—many of whom have resided for many years in this city—altogether gratuitous and utterly inconsistent with well known facts. It cannot be affirmed with any pretence of evidence, that the yellow fever or any other epidemics, have generally first made their appearance, or been characterized by extraordinary prevalence or peculiar malignity in the vicinity of these localities, while it may be affirmed and proved beyond contradiction that a considerable region, in the heart of which was located the common burial ground or Potters Field, during all the time it was so used, was one of the healthiest, and even a resort from the contagion of yellow fever. And it is also remarkable that since the establishment of the Magnolia Cemetery and the adjacent burial grounds, where it is notorious that three-fourths, more probably, nine-tenths of the victims of the yellow fever have been buried, our city has been more fearfully and frequently visited with this pestilence than before. This disease cannot, therefore, in the opinion of your Memorialists, with any show of reason, be ascribed to the city cemeteries.

Your Memorialists, therefore, humbly pray your Honorable Body, that the said Bill may not be passed into an Ordinance of the City.

Robert Adger,  
James Welsman,  
John Greaton,  
John W. Caldwell,  
J. F. Blacklock,  
Thomas Y. Simons,  
T. Grange Simons, jr.

James Chapman,  
James K. Robinson,  
Chas. F. Mitchell,  
Theodore Stoney,  
Wm. B. Pringle,  
Matte A. Pringle,  
Robert B. Chapman,

John H. Simons,  
 William Mazyck,  
 W. W. I. Mazyck,  
 W. Alston Pringle,  
 John Hanckel,  
 William Simons,  
 Wm. N. Hamilton,  
 Joel Stevens,  
 Geo. W. Walker,  
 Edward McCrady,  
 Edward McCrady, jr.  
 J. E. Adger.  
 G. H. Moffitt,  
 A. McD. Brown,  
 Sam'l Y. Tupper,  
 F. J. Porcher,  
 Fleetwood Lanneau,  
 J. T. Kanapaux,  
 Benj. F. Wilden,  
 G. W. Wienges,  
 Jno. W. Stoy,  
 C. N. Averill,  
 E. L. Trenholm,  
 George A. Trenholm,  
 Jas. F. Green,  
 John Colcock,  
 R. Dewar Bacot,  
 S. S. Farrar,  
 G. Robertson,  
 Wm. L. King,  
 J. G. Budd,  
 M. E. Carrere, M. D.  
 Eliza F. Carrere,  
 D. X. LaFar, P. M. C.  
 Andrew Reid,  
 Chas Kanapaux,  
 R. H. Teasdale,  
 Ferdinand Jacobs,

William H. Betts,  
 Wm. Birnie,  
 A. S. Johnston,  
 William Calder,  
 George B. Reid,  
 Alex. Gordon,  
 T. J. Tobias,  
 Jos. L. Tobias,  
 S. J. Wagner,  
 J. K. Sass,  
 J. Cheesborough.  
 R. Wainwright Bacot,  
 James R. Pringle,  
 O. J. Chafee,  
 Theodore D. Wagner,  
 James S. Gibbes,  
 Thomas M. Wagner,  
 Thomas J. Kerr,  
 S. W. Fisher,  
 J. M. Caldwell,  
 Henry Griggs,  
 Jacob F. Schirmer,  
 Charles H. West,  
 S. S. Howell,  
 J. H. Honour,  
 Thos. H. Croft,  
 Jas. H. Murrell,  
 M. Laidler,  
 W. Tennent, jr.  
 Donald Mackintosh,  
 J. B. Lance,  
 Thos. Waring,  
 T. Fillette,  
 W. C. Forsyth,  
 W. Carew,  
 W. J. Yates,  
 M. Koopmann,  
 C. S. Maule,

Samuel Wiley,  
 M. McMaster,  
 Thos. Wallace,  
 Robert W. Burnham,  
 S. A. Benjamin,  
 John Mood,  
 F. C. Bartlett,  
 John Johnson,  
 John Kenifick,  
 John McCarthy,  
 C. H. Browning,  
 John S. Bird,  
 Geo. F. Cole,  
 Henry A. Mullings,  
 Jonathan Bryan,  
 R. M. Alexander,  
 H. Z. Laurey,  
 A. W. Black,  
 P. V. Dibble,  
 William B. Heriot,  
 T. Alex. Broughton,  
 W. B. Moore,  
 Benj. Ford,  
 Henry Clark,  
 J. Legare Yates,  
 Jos. T. Caldwell,  
 James O'Neale,  
 George Kinloch,  
 John B. Moffett,

W. H. Ohlandt,  
 F. J. C. Patterson,  
 Chas. C. Strohecker,  
 T. S. Heffron,  
 W. A. Skrine, M. D.  
 J. R. Wiltberger,  
 W. E. Scott,  
 H. Sieglirg,  
 W. B. Yates,  
 Wm. S. Caldwell,  
 H. Y. Gray,  
 Hugh E. Vincent,  
 B. W. Palmer,  
 A. J. Burk,  
 James Moorhead,  
 Benj. F. Moore,  
 H. Casey,  
 A. E. Miller,  
 Benj. T. Rhett,  
 R. C. Gilchrist,  
 George Buist,  
 W. J. Laval,  
 John F. O'Neill,  
 J. P. Sires,  
 J. A. Burckmyer.  
 George W. King,  
 John G. Milner.  
 Chas. T. Kinloch,  
 Robt. A. Young.

A much larger number of signatures might have been obtained *but for want of time*.

# MEMORIAL

*Of Sundry Churches against the Bill to prevent Interments within the City.*

---

*To the Honorable the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Charleston :*

The Memorial of the undersigned, representing various Churches in this City who have burial grounds in their possession, respectfully sheweth, that the report which has been laid before the City Council, and is now under consideration, proposing to withdraw from the above Churches the right of burial in these grave-yards, involves the violation of the rights of the Churches, and sacrifice of sacred feelings on the part of their membership, without any adequate grounds.

Your Memorialists further submit, that it has ever been to many of themselves and the constituencies whom they represent a cherished hope and tender expectation, that their bodies shall at last be consigned to the same hallowed ground where already their dead repose; and they now respectfully claim, that before surrendering to municipal authority a private interest so naturally and justly dear, it should be distinctly shown that the public good actually requires the surrender.

The large majority of your Memorialists are not convinced that the yellow fever, the epidemic which the closing of the intramural grave-yards is intended to avert, has in any instance or to any extent, been caused by the effluvia, supposed to proceed from these grave-yards. On the contrary, they believe, that the prevalence of the South and South-West winds, which, during yellow fever seasons, blow over low marshy lands, river swamps, rice fields and mill ponds, filled with decaying vegetable matter—a region extending to the West and South-West sixty or seventy miles; and that, within the City, the existence of wet, filthy yards, and unclean sinks and

drains holding in solution decaying animal and vegetable substances; and above all, that the number of strangers, who, in attending upon funerals to distant grave-yards, are often exposed to the inclemency of the rainy season and not unfrequently return to the City after nightfall; render it unnecessary that any other local cause of yellow fever should be sought for. They are aware, that the medical profession themselves are now disputing as to the cause of the yellow fever; that the question, whether it is of local origin, or annually transported afresh to this City from the West Indies, has not yet been decided; and under these circumstances, they trust the City Council will not gratuitously suppose a cause, and to this supposition sacrifice the dearest rights of those who have put them into office. Further, they have been assured, that citizens living with their families in the vicinity of grave-yards have not exhibited any greater liability to the fever than persons living elsewhere.

Your Memorialists need scarcely say, that if any of the grave-yards should now, or hereafter, be crowded to excess, it is in the power of Council to prevent any further unhealthy multiplication of burials in these places, by an ordinance requiring that every grave in the City shall be dug to a suitable depth; that in no case, shall one coffin be laid upon another; and that no one but pew-holders or worshippers in certain Churches, or owners of burial lots, with their families, shall be entitled to burial in the grave-yards belonging to the Churches, and finally that burials at a late hour in the afternoon shall be prohibited by a heavy penalty.

All your Memorialists agree in the opinion, that the evil, if evil it is, is gradually curing itself; and that so large a proportion of interments (a proportion so manifestly increasing,) takes place in the Magnolia Cemetery, and others, without the City limits, it is plainly impolitic and unnecessary, that the City Council should take any further action, than that above suggested, in the premises. They are convinced that the measure heretofore proposed in Council would act unfavorably upon the poor, by the great additions which it would make to the expense of burials; and they would be reluctant to lose

the moral influence exerted among us by the secluded resting-places and eloquent monuments of the dead. They trust, the Council before legislating in a matter in which the interests and happiness of so many citizens are deeply involved, will not disregard the opinions and wishes of those who have cheerfully borne a part in clothing them with the authority they now wear.

Your Memorialist therefore pray that the ordinance now under consideration in Council, shall not pass; but that, rather, the wisdom of our City Fathers may ordain the regulations above suggested, so that the rights and privileges of intramural interments may be guarded against abuse.

And, as in duty bound, your Memorialists will ever pray.

JOHN BACHMAN, CHAIRMAN,

*In behalf of the Lutheran Church, Archdale street.*

E. T. WINKLER, } *First Baptist Church.*  
B. C. PRESSLEY. }

DONALD MACKINTOSH, *President Central Church.*

P. TRAPIER KEITH, }  
J. M. CAMPBELL, Ch'n., } *St. Michael's Church.*  
J. L. PETIGRU, }  
JAS. P. JERVEY, }

WILLIAM DEHON, }  
HENRY D. LESESNE, } *St. Philips's Church.*  
C. B. COCHRAN, }  
JOHN B. WHITE. }

DANIEL RAVENEL, *President French Protestant Church.*

W. LAVAL, *President Corporation M. P. Church, Ch'ston.*

JOHN FORREST, *First Presbyterian Church.*

W. H. FLEMMING, *Pastor of Trinity M. E. Church.*

JAS. R. MOOD, *Trustee Trinity M. E. Church.*

F. MILTON KENNEDY, *Pastor Spring street M. E. Church.*

A. W. MARSHALL, *Minister of St. John's Chapel, Hampstead.*

SAM'L L. WAGNER, *In behalf of Cumberland Church.*

JAMES CHAPMAN, } *Unitarian Church.*  
SAM'L S. MILLS. }

CHAS. EDMONDSTON, *St. Peter's Church.*

R. C. GILCHRIST, *Second Presbyterian Church.*



*To the Honorable the City Council of Charleston, South Carolina.*

GENTLEMEN :—At a very large meeting of the Corporation of the Second Presbyterian Church of this city, the following “Memorial” was unanimously adopted, and I was ordered to lay it before your body at your next meeting.

With great respect, &c.,

R. C. GILCHRIST, *Secretary 2d P. C.*

## MEMORIAL.

*On City Burials, from Second Presbyterian Church.*

The recent report and action of our City Council, on the subject of Burials within the Corporation limits of the City, has made it important that this church should express itself in accordance with the other churches interested in the decision.

This is equally necessary on the ground of taste, of interest, of feeling and of duty. The ground occupied by us as a Cemetery, involved heavy expenditure in the beginning, beyond what was otherwise necessary for the purpose of building. The interest on said investment, the expenses incident to the planting of trees and keeping in repair, and the erection of costly monuments, have accumulated the amount of said outlay and will necessitate much continued expenditure, only to be repaid by the intended use of such grounds and the revenue derived therefrom. Vested rights have thus been secured to the Church and to numberless parties enfeoffed with them, with which the decisions of the Courts give ground to believe—no power short of the Legislature can legally interfere, and that only on the basis of clearly established injury to the public.

Increasing attention has also been given for many years, to the order, beauty, and enclosure of our Cemetery. It is now a place of great attraction and resort, and cannot fail to exercise the happiest influence upon all who are drawn to meditation among its tombs and to hear sermons from its stones.

The increased population of this city, of the silent dead, multiplies and quickens the reverential feeling with which many regard this last home, where their beloved rest from their labors, and where they soon hope, or expect, to be joined to their fathers and united again in the grave. In a recent letter from that "old man eloquent," the Hon. W. C. Preston, to a friend in Columbia, he gives expression to the deep feeling of nature by the touching remark, "there is one grave in Columbia, reserved for me, in which I yet hope to lie."

It becomes, therefore, our duty as a Corporation, to protect the rights of our Church; to increase its attractions; to cherish consecrated feelings and ardent hopes; and to give increasing potency to the teachings of the dead, by resisting any attempts to interfere with our Cemetery. The law does not permit it and facts do not justify it. *Our burial ground is dry and yet largely unoccupied*, and we challenge the exposure of any injury arising from it, to the surrounding region. Be it therefore

*Resolved*, That this Corporation earnestly protests against the adoption, by our City Council, of any measures for the prevention of burials—under proper restrictions—within the burial grounds attached to some of our City Churches.

R. C. GILCHRIST, *Secretary Corporation.*

# REPORT

## *Of the Committee of the City Council of Charleston on Burial Grounds and City Interments.*

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On the 4th of January last, the Committee of Council to whom had been referred the subject of City Interments, had the honor of making a report and offering a bill for the consideration of this body. The report and bill lay over until the 18th instant, when at a meeting of Council two memorials were presented, adverse to the conclusions of your Committee. One of these was from sundry citizens, and signed by 148 persons of high respectability. The other was a memorial commencing as follows: "The memorial of the undersigned, representing various Churches in this city which have burial grounds in their possession." Council recommitted the report and the memorials to the Committee, with instructions to make further examination of the whole subject. In accordance with these instructions, and to meet the public demand for light, and facts, the Committee have devoted considerable time to the investigation, and should the details be of such a kind as to shock the sensibilities, it must be remembered that the Committee have no alternative. They are charged with presenting a measure to Council that "involves the violation of the rights of the Churches and the sacrifice of sacred feelings on the part of their membership, *without any adequate grounds.*"

Before we proceed to the consideration of the matter recommitted to us, it is proper that we should take up the memorials. The first, the one signed by citizens, urges the consideration that is due to feeling and affection, and the desire that so many have, that "their own remains would be allowed to be deposited, and to *repose* in the same hallowed spots with those

of their kindred; and their dust suffered to mingle with that of their own loved ones who had gone before them to the grave." Perhaps the exposition we have to make may show, that very few of the dead within city cemeteries repose in peace, or that kindred dust can mingle with those who have gone before, after the lapse of a little time. It may be observed too, that though this memorial is signed by quite a large number of citizens, possibly it is not the exponent of the views of the majority. No petition has been presented to Council from those who regard interments within the city as objectionable. In regard to the memorial coming from Pastors and Churches, it is important to know how far it expresses the sentiments of the congregations. The marked and unusual form of the demonstration, the excitement produced by it, and its intended effect upon the city authorities, all require that its merits should be calmly and plainly discussed and understood. That there is a difference of opinion concerning the propriety of continuing burials within the bounds of the city, among those who constitute the congregations of most, if not all of the Churches annexed to the memorial, is undeniable, and it has been made known to your Committee, that there are signatures affixed to it by persons whose private feelings led them to overlook the importance of full authority when using the name of corporations or congregations. In more than one instance the action of these "representatives" has been objected to by members and officers of their own Churches. It is proper to say in this connection, that the signature by which the Young Men's Christian Association was placed before the public under this memorial, seems to have been an error. The original manuscript is not so signed. But whether this memorial represents more, or less, of the sentiment of the Churches and corporations, whose names appear upon it, the positions it assumes, and the statements made, deserve profound attention, for it is but a logical conclusion, that in this paper, prepared by an intelligent and able Committee, after due deliberation and under imposing circumstances, we have *all* that can be urged against the movement in Council, and in favor of continuing the burial of the dead within the city.

We propose to examine the salient points of the memorial in detail. The first point is, that the City Council in closing the city burial grounds will violate "the rights of the Churches," and "sacrifice sacred feelings on the part of their membership," "without any adequate grounds." It is presumed that the memorialists, on becoming satisfied that "cause" does exist, will be willing to abandon the "rights" they may possess of burying their dead within their grave-yards, or aid in some other way to remove such evils as are now complained of; and on demonstrating the existence of these evils, private feeling will unquestionably yield to considerations of public good. Your Committee have never said, and do not now say, that epidemical yellow fever "has in any instance, or to any extent, been *caused* by the effluvia supposed to proceed from these graveyards." We have considered this subject, not as a new thing, started under the pressure of the late epidemic, but as a matter connected with the general hygiene of the city. It is impossible, perhaps, to determine the cause or causes of yellow fever,—it is not impossible nor difficult to show how seriously animal as well as vegetable putrefaction deteriorates the atmosphere, poisoning the very source from which health can come, and inducing that condition that has often resulted in a spread of malignant disease. It will be seen in the prosecution of this examination, that if animal putrefaction is not the cause of yellow fever, it has produced sickness approaching it in type and equally fatal in result. This being the position of the Committee in their former report, and holding similar views now, it may be presumed the "City Council will not gratuitously suppose a cause (for yellow fever) and to this supposition sacrifice the dearest rights of those who have put them into office," and thus "disregard the opinions and wishes of those who have cheerfully borne a part in clothing them with the authority they now wear."

The duties of the City Council are often perplexing and onerous, and when their constituency is divided in opinion it is impossible to give satisfaction to both parties. It is the province of the City Council to act with firmness and dignity

on any and every question of public concernment, after a fair and impartial examination of all the attending facts, and *that* Council will not be worthy of public confidence, that allows itself to swerve from even unpleasant duty, by the "*wishes*" of their most esteemed friends. The Memorialists were assured that "citizens living with their families, in the vicinity of grave-yards, have not exhibited any greater liability to the fever, than persons elsewhere." Without asserting that the grave-yards were the cause, it is still a singular fact that during the yellow fever epidemics of the last few years, the locations of the severest type have been in the streets and squares embraced by Archdale, Queen, State and Market Streets, and that within this circuit, several of the largest and most crowded grave-yards are located, in which have been buried, from time to time, the remains of an immense number of human beings. This fact will again be alluded to. The Memorialists further say, that they "agree in the opinion that the evil—if evil it is—of intermural burials is gradually curing itself." This opinion, as it relates to the whole city, is not sustained by facts. Entire abolishment of the custom by voluntary individual action, or by the action of the churches, cannot be expected. The same feelings and rights that are now pressed upon Council for consideration, will pass on to the descendants of the present generation, while the increase of City Burials, from another class, is positive, from year to year. There are other points suggested in these Memorials, such as the suppression of crowded grave-yards—regulating the depth of graves and preventing the opening of old ones,—prescribing who may be buried in church-yards, and who may not—the hours of burial—the effect upon the poor of abolishing intermural interments, and "the moral influence now extended among us by the secluded resting places, and eloquent monuments of the dead." Some of these suggestions will be met by the general developments of this investigation, others will receive special attention hereafter. With these preliminary remarks your Committee will present a few historical facts in regard to "intermural interments." It has so often been said that this custom is one of compara-

tively modern date, and that statement is so well sustained by history, that it is now quite unnecessary to do more than allude to its introduction. It must be admitted that, with the exception of a few barbarous tribes, all nations, through all ages, have venerated the burial places of the dead; that inhumation has been the prevailing custom, and that the vicinity of towns and cities was scrupulously avoided, down to the time of Constantine. After he embraced the Christian Religion, innovations were permitted in the mode and places of burial. "Constantine was himself buried in the vestibule of a temple he had built," and the same honor was conferred upon many of his successors. The privilege was extended, subsequently, to benefactors of the church, to those who had been liberal in decorating altars, and in defraying the expenses incurred in performing the august ceremonies of Religion, until at length, from veneration, ambition, or superstition, the abuse was carried so far as to permit general interments in the vicinity of churches and within their walls.

Attempts were made by Emperors and Ecclesiastics at various times, to correct this abuse. Theodosius the Great, in 381, forbade the interment of the dead within cities. This arrested the custom to a great extent, until the Eighth Century. Then Walford, Abbot of Palazzolo, in Tuscany, desired to be buried in his own cloister. This led again to the admission of sepulchres, tombs, and vaults, into church edifices, until the custom became general of burying the dead in or near these buildings. It is proper to say, however, that in Roman Catholic countries, the authorities of Councils, and the decrees of Popes, have been directly opposed to interments in the vicinity of cities. In the reign of Louis XV. of France, the Archbishop of Toulouse issued a decree against the admission of the dead within consecrated walls, and in places held sacred, and also against burials within the city, and this decree was confirmed and sanctioned the ensuing year, by the Parliament of France, and by the King. This however, was not done until a thorough examination had been made by a Commission of scientific and professional men, who, in their report, gave it as their opinion that the vapours exhaling from putre-

faction, filled the air with chemical compounds, dangerous to health, and productive of malignant diseases. In consequence of this report an act was promulgated, commanding all towns and villages, to discontinue the use of their old burial places, and form others at a distance from the habitations of the living. At a period earlier than this, the city of Nuremberg prohibited the burial of the dead within city limits, and to Nuremberg belongs the honor of having achieved the first victory over an ancient and dangerous abuse. After the action of the French Government, the Emperor Joseph II. reformed the entire system in Austria, and the German States, have followed the movement one after the other. The Prussian law states that "no corpse shall be interred in the inhabited parts of towns." The decree of June 12th, 1804, in France, prevents any interments within *towns and villages*. In Saxony, though there is no law prohibiting burials in cities, yet exercising a sound judgment, there is not a burial place within any city or town, "public opinion is so far enlightened" as to require no law of prohibition. The reform at last reached England—and there met with determined opposition. Although "proof positive, undeniable," and "overwhelming," of their unhealthy condition, was presented—although grave-yards and churches absolutely reeked with abominations, yet it required years of earnest and determined effort to prevail upon Parliament to take up the subject. But the work is in progress, and the day is not distant when England will abolish a custom that, in ninety cases out of a hundred, is attended with details too shocking for recital. It is hardly necessary to allude to the change in our own country. Almost every town and village now possesses—far away from the haunts and busy hum of men—her "city of the silent." many of them more than one. To these hallowed and peaceful resting places, are borne the dead, and amid the soft sounds and bright hues of nature are placed in her bosom, with no fear that after a few years of repose the sacred *dust* will be rudely thrown aside to make room for another.

Having thus presented a few incidents of history connected with ancient and modern customs, the Committee will next



present some of the "facts," they have been able to gather, concerning the deleterious nature of animal putrescency. Medical works are full upon this subject, and experience leaves no room for cavil.

Macartney says: "From the introduction of the recently dead animal matter into the human system, the most dangerous consequences arise."

M. Orfila applied putrid animal matter to wounds in dogs and other quadrupeds, and found that death generally ensued in less than twenty-four hours; extensive local inflammation, and constitutional fever were induced." "Dr. Majendie, seeing that the putrefaction of animal and vegetable matter, produced a poison which had the most injurious and fatal effects upon the human body, and while during the state of decomposition, and under circumstances which produced it in a high state of concentration, was, on a single inhalation, capable of instantaneously causing death, and that, even when diffused in the atmosphere, and spread over a large extent of country, it was the fruitful source of disease and death. Seeing the vast number of facts which had been collected, requiring only a single and simple experiment to connect them, demonstrated beyond a possibility of doubt, that the poison in question was caused by animal and vegetable substances in a state of putrescency—by cold and other agents he condensed it, and found, that by applying it to an animal previously in good health, he destroyed life, with the most intense symptoms of malignant fever. Ten or twelve drops of water containing this matter, were injected into the jugular vein of a dog; in a short time, it was seized with acute fever; the action of the heart was inordinately excited; the respiration accelerated; the surface heat increased; the prostration of strength extreme; the muscular power so exhausted, that the animal lay on the ground unable to move. After a short period, it was seized with the identical black vomit so characteristic of yellow fever, and what is still more remarkable, is the fact, that, by varying the intensity of the dose of poison, he could produce fever of almost any type, endowed with almost any degree of mortal power. When

diffused in the atmosphere, this poison taken into the lungs, or absorbed by the skin, enters the blood, producing diseases of varying malignity, modified, as the producing causes, be of animal or vegetable origin. Thus, when the effluvium from marshes, or decayed vegetable matter was employed, intermittent fever, (as ague,) and remittent fever were produced; but when that from animal matter was experimented with, typhus, and the order of fever marked with a diminution of power, in all the functions of the body, and a general disposition to putrescency both in the solids and fluids, invariably followed." These views are sustained by Armstrong, Gregory, Bichat, and others. Bichat says: "Among the gases given off by animal decomposition, we must consider sulphuretted hydrogen, the deutoxide of nitrogen, and the chloride of ammonia, as eminently deleterious, for when introduced in sufficient quantity into the animal economy, they instantly occasion death."

Mr. Underwood, in his examination before the Committee from Parliament in 1850, states, that these, and other gases disengaged from the human body, while under decomposition, "hold in suspension putrescent animal matter." So, that on inhaling an atmosphere vitiated by these gases, some portion of the actual decaying body passes into the lungs and blood!

These facts existing, the inquiry naturally arises, as to the influence of decomposing human remains, deposited in graves within our own city. If it has been found that decaying bodies give off gases that find their way through the soil, and escape into the air, and if, on disturbing old graves, pestiferous results have followed, it is perfectly proper to say that our city burial grounds have no exemption from the same evils and dangers. Testimony upon this point—the escape of gases from the putrescent bodies beneath the soil—is uniform from every part of the world, and it is indisputable that particles of animal matter, carried by these gases, or thrown out on the opening of new graves, may be detected, not by one sense only, but by others. To what cause are the lambent lights, so often seen flickering over the burial places of the dead, to be ascribed, but to the exhalations from beneath? And who has not,

many and many a time, observed upon the walks and paths of our own church yards; aye, even in the streets before them, on a warm, damp summer evening, the phosphorescent sparkle that glitters amid corruption and death. The commission appointed by the British Parliament, in 1850, to examine and report upon the subject of intramural interments, which commission consisted of the Earl of Carlisle, Lord Ashley, Edwin Chadwick and T. Southwood Smith, in their report, say, as follows: "Without re-stating all the evidence which has been widely promulgated, and which has, indeed, now become matter of familiar knowledge, we may safely rest the sanitary part of the case on the single fact, that the placing of the dead body in a grave and covering it with a few feet of earth, does not prevent the gases generated by decomposition, together with the putrescent matter which they hold in suspension, from permeating the surrounding soil, and escaping into the air above and the water beneath." Again, they say, "These gases from a common grave, pass gradually, and without restraint, into the surrounding earth; they are only in part absorbed by the soil, and some of them are scarcely absorbed at all, but are diffused in every direction, though, it would appear, in the upward direction, chiefly, thus directly polluting the air." "I have examined," says Dr. Lyon Playfair, "various church yards and burial grounds, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the layer of earth above the bodies is sufficient to absorb the putrid gases evolved. The slightest inspection shows that they are not thoroughly absorbed by the soil lying over the bodies. I know several church yards from which most fœtid smells are evolved; and gases with similar odor are emitted from the sides of sewers passing in the vicinity of church yards, although they may be more than thirty feet from them. If these gases are thus laterally evolved, they must be equally emitted in an upward direction."

These statements can be fortified by an almost endless amount of evidence given before authorized Committees; and by the *oral testimony of many of our own citizens concerning certain grave-yards in this city.* Of the effect of con-

tinned deterioration of atmosphere by these noxious gases, Dr. Sutherland, in his report to Parliament, says: "It is not always easy to separate the effect of each specific cause of disease when a number co-operate; but after a most extensive experience, the evidence which has come before me has produced on my own mind an abiding conviction, that the effect of many causes of unhealthiness, and that of Church yards amongst others has been very much underrated. I have no doubt, whatever, that the burial grounds, as at present constituted, are a continual source of pestilence, slow perhaps in its operation, and hence overlooked by ordinary observers. They are undermining the constitutional stamina of thousands of our town populations, while people are denying that they have any injurious tendency; and it is only when some epidemic comes to try it, like a touchstone, that the consequence of long antecedent neglect becomes so apparent as to rivet attention and excite alarm. The Committee will now proceed to lay before Council some of the "facts" they have obtained concerning Church yards, and burial grounds, within the limits of this city, and thus ascertain whether any of the dangers and evils we have narrated can be predicated upon them. If it is found that the condition of these burial places, and the present usages of interment do not involve the dangers we have described, then of course no action by Council is proper, and the movement has been without "adequate cause." If, on the contrary, it shall be clearly seen that we are subject to danger—that the danger is increasing, and *that so far from protecting the sacred resting places of the dead, the only mode by which city interments have been, or can be continued, to a great extent, is by their utter desecration*; then it may be, Council, after due deliberation, will so legislate as to arrest the evils complained of. The Memorialists desire to repose with their kindred in peace after death. This is a natural and universal sentiment. We would say it is a *right* that every human being should be *protected* in. But it is not a *right* granted or allowed in city cemeteries. A few are protected by the costly marbles above their graves, but the humble dead have no pre-emption claim. The great mass thus buried have been disturbed over

and over again, and will be, so long as this system is pursued. In point of fact, almost every Church corporation has rules upon this subject prescribing the *time* of repose to be allowed to a decaying body, after which all *right* to the "poor spot of earth" ceases. That this is so, no one can dispute, but we refer to authority. In 1825, two reports were presented to the vestry of St. Phillips' Church, by a Committee, to whom had been referred the inquiry concerning the laying of slabs and building of monuments in their Church yard. This Committee, through its Chairman, the Hon. Thomas S. Grimke, say thus: "The Clerk informs us that the time within which a body and coffin become so decayed that the same place may be used for another interment is three (3) years. Let us call it five (5) years. Now, it is manifest that if we have ground enough for ten years ahead of us, we have enough for any number of periods of ten years, even to one thousand." What becomes of the "repose of the dead?" These Reports are valuable to us, and we shall use them freely. The *old* burial grounds in this city *are all* either overflowing and overrunning with the dead, or those portions that are used have been dug over and over on the principle above mentioned. This we proceed to *prove*. Mr. Grimke says in his Report that there were 80,000 square feet of ground in St. Phillips' church yard at that date, (since then, by change of location of the church building the quantity is less) that could be used for burials. There were, in the whole yard, but 275 tombs, monuments, slabs and headstones, showing the resting place of some three or four hundred persons. But that yard had been in use one hundred years, and during that time about *seven thousand* dead bodies had been placed there, of which number twenty-five hundred had been interred within twenty-five years! The Report claimed *all* the ground, except that occupied by tombs, monuments, slabs, and head stones, as open for burials. What has become of the six thousands and six hundred? Deducting, as the Report does, 20,000 feet occupied by these monuments, the capacity of this ground is reduced to 60,000 feet. Allowing 30 feet for each grave, the yard will provide for 2,000 separate burials

only. Since that time thirty-four years have passed away, and about two thousand five hundred more bodies have been interred; so that now, in a place where, even allowing but 20 feet to each, only half as much as is allowed in Europe, three thousand could have separate and undisturbed repose. About *ten thousand* have already *succeeded each other*. Adjoining St. Phillips' church yard is the burial ground of the Circular Church. This Church was located as early as 1690, and has been a burial place for one hundred and sixty-nine years. Its measurement is about 20,000 square feet, capable of giving separate interment to one thousand bodies, allowing 20 feet to each 2 feet 6 inches by 8 feet. A considerable portion of this ground is protected by monuments &c; yet, as near as can be calculated, over five thousand, *possibly* nearer ten thousand bodies, have been placed within those narrow *precincts*.

The Baptist church yard, has been in use since 1685, but the interments have not been so large as in some other burial grounds. St. Michael's church yard has been used since 1690. Formerly burials were numerous, laterly very few. The Huguenot church yard was opened about 1700. The First Presbyterian or Scots church was founded in 1731, but probably burials did not take place in their present yard, until 1771, or '72, as for forty years that church was united with the "Independents." Burials have been made in Trinity, Bethel, St. Mary's, Unitarian, Lutheran, Second and Third Presbyterian and one or two other church yards for periods varying from forty to seventy-five years, and are all more or less crowded with the dead. Some of them under the system that has prevailed have yet some spare room, but a measurement of their grounds, compared with the number of their interments, will show that the one dead body has too often invaded the resting place of another. But these are calculations, measurements and inferences. We will proceed to actual demonstration, and prove by witnesses that many of these yards are full—that the graves of the dead are desecrated—that there is no repose for those who do not sleep beneath the sculptured stone, and that some of the horrors we have read of,

concerning other cemeteries, have their counterpart here. We shall not recite *all* that has come to our knowledge, but so much as will show to churches, pastors, citizens and council the necessity of legislation and supervision. We have competent proof for all that we shall relate. Not long since on digging a grave in the — church yard the coffin of a female was struck. The body was not fully decayed—it was not removed but was split into two parts, one half remaining in the old grave, the other half thrown out. Within six months a place of interment was sought for in — church yard for the remains of a lady. The sounding iron was freely used, to find an unoccupied spot, and at length a place was selected as the most suitable that could be found. On digging the grave however *five* previous interments were disturbed. Not long ago Mr. — determined to remove from — church yard the remains of his wife, who had been interred some ten years. On opening the ground in a lot which he had *bought* as being free from burials, it was found that older interments had been cut through so that the remains of two or more bodies and coffins were so mingled as to present *doubt* in relation to his wife's grave, and it was only by an accidental circumstance that the identity was secured. In — church yard the following scene occurred not a great while since. A funeral procession of a lady was approaching. The witness in this instance had preceeded the hearse by a few minutes. On reaching the grave he found that it had been dug precisely over another coffin, and that the grave digger had broken up the top, taken out the remains, part of which were on the ground and a part at the head of the grave, while the black sides and bottom of the old coffin were left yawning to receive its new occupant. Horrified and disgusted—the gentleman ordered the instant breaking down and covering of the remains of the coffin and its former tenant and only succeeded in securing them from public view, as the procession entered the yard. It was ascertained afterwards that the person so disturbed had died of yellow fever. A vault was constructed not long since in — church yard by which *fourteen* bodies in different stages of decomposition were cast out of their

resting places. A gentleman having given orders to open a grave within his private lot in — church yard on visiting it near its completion, discovered that it had been opened upon a previous interment, and actually took up from the side of the grave his own mother's scull. A gentleman owning an old family private lot in — church yard about eighteen feet square of the capacity of sixteen proper burials; informed a member of the committee, that to his knowledge there had been buried there already between thirty and forty persons, and now when there is occasion to open a grave, the oldest burial is selected and the mouldering remains beneath broken up, to make room for the recent dead. Is this the mingling of dust that is desired? Since the committee have been engaged in this investigation they have received a variety of communications and statements, concerning different church yards. They will copy one that was sent them; *verbatim*. "There was a vault opened this morning in — church yard, the stench from which was so great, and occurring just as the family were sitting down to breakfast, I went over myself to see what had occasioned it. On looking into the vault I saw four coffins floating within three feet of the surface, and the smell was so strong I had to order them to burn tar. This vault is about four feet wide and five or six feet deep, and only covered with a slate slab. The water which the workmen bailed out was of a deep green color, and appeared to be very slimy. I, as well as the whole of my family, can vouch that these things occur frequently." This liquid putrefaction was poured out upon the surface of the earth and absorbed or evaporated.

A gentleman, on passing — church yard, observed several boys running about the graves. On going in, to ascertain what they were about, he discovered that they were actually playing "foot ball," by kicking a couple of skulls around, that had just been thrown from a new made grave. We do not believe in the idea, of the moral tendency of city burial grounds. This incident, only falls a little short of the exquisite satire of Hogarth, when he depicted the Idle Apprentice with his companions, gambling upon a church tomb stone.



The question, whether interments within the City are yearly decreasing or not, requires some further notice. From 1822 to 1848 inclusive, there were 10,919 deaths in Charleston, in what are now called the Lower Wards. This is an average of 737 deaths per annum, add a *pro rata* number for the then population of the Neck, now the Upper Wards, and the average of deaths will be about 900; all of whom, we will presume, were buried within the City and Neck, which, included, then, as now, the Potters Field. We find from the Registrars books, the burials last year within the City limits, excluding the Potters Field, were 910—376 whites, 534 blacks. It is thus seen, that while interments are less in the old City burial grounds, a new evil has sprung up, or an old one is rapidly increasing in magnitude. To this, we will soon invite special attention. It has been said, by the Committee, that this movement to close the burial grounds is not the result of a new idea, or owing to the pressure of late events. For many years, there has been in the public mind an anxiety on the subject, accompanied sometimes with healthy demonstrations. Thirty-four years ago, Mr. Grimke says, in his report to the Vestry of St. Phillips' Church, already alluded to: "The time has certainly now arrived, (if indeed, it did not always exist,) when it is very desirable, to have no burials within the City. There is, we believe, no dissenting opinion on this subject." And the first part of the 6th Resolution offered by this Committee, is as follows:

"*Resolved*, That it is exceedingly to be desired that the time should come, and that speedily, when all interments within the City, shall cease, either by the voluntary act of the several Churches, or by public authority."

Since then, a generation has passed away, and 30,000 dead bodies have been added to the corruption and putrefaction in our midst. Your Committee has made special investigation and examination into the system, that has grown up almost imperceptibly of the burial of the colored population. For reasons that may, or may not be satisfactory, the different Churches have generally followed in the plan, of buying a place of interment for their colored membership, and there are

some lots owned or held by Trustees for the use of colored burial associations. These grounds are scattered thickly all through the Upper Wards, and are left generally to the superintendence of the negroes themselves. In the Lower Wards, there are sixteen burial grounds for whites, and five for colored people. In the Upper Wards, there are fourteen for whites, and twelve for the colored, not including Potters Field. A careful and experimental examination of some of these yards, resulted in discovering dead bodies not twenty-four inches under the surface, and the *average* in several yards was not three feet—while not one had an average burial of four feet beneath the surface. The soil, in most of these lots, is a light sand, and it is a notorious fact, that from some of them, in the summer, noxious exhalations are often manifest. The sounding iron is constantly used in them, to determine the place of burial, and these openings go down directly upon the dead, forming tubes or air holes, for the free escape of the gases from the putrifying bodies beneath.

The upper part of the city is rapidly filling up with a highly respectable population, and it is a reasonable demand from them, that if burials in church-yards must be continued, they may at least be released from the nuisance of these grave-yards for the colored population. It has been suggested that a large and ample portion of the city cemetery be fenced off from the public part and called Ashley Cemetery—that this be subdivided by neat railings and pathways into lots, large enough for each Society, and given to them for the purpose of burial, and that all burials then be under the regulation of the Ordinance concerning public interments. This being done, the colored population could have the same privileges allowed them as now exist, but under the supervision and regulation of the law and of the proper officer. The Committee have not overlooked the tombs and vaults that are occasionally used within the city. Some of these are constructed in such a manner as that each body may be placed within a separate niche, and closed by brick work and cement. We have evidence that, even secured in this form, the decaying body not only obeys the law of nature and returns to dust through the

process of decomposition, but that the poisonous gases do *penetrate* the stone walls and escape into the tomb and into the air. Another mode of placing the dead in tombs is by laying them side by side in a single chamber, and piling them one above the other, until from the decay below, one crushes into another, until the whole becomes a mass of horrible corruption, presenting a spectacle beyond the power of words to describe. A third form of vault is constructed beneath the earth, and covered either by a tomb or slab above. If the dead are placed in them without other covering, *time* changes these interiors into charnel-houses. Other vaults are constructed by building brick walls beneath the soil, dividing the spaces enclosed into smaller divisions, filling them with sand or earth, and when a body is buried replacing the earth firmly above them, thus filling up the vault, and securing it safely by a slab. This is unquestionably the best mode of sepulchre, when vaults or tombs are used. Another form of vault is too often found, which should not be permitted to exist within the city. Narrow grave-like cavities, bricked up and covered with a slab, within which bodies are placed one after the other, only to add to the putrefaction that fills the dreadful place. Some of these tombs are occasionally opened to receive temporarily the bodies of strangers. This should be *prohibited by law*. Owners of tombs would much prefer not to open them for this purpose, but who can *refuse* an application of this kind? Last summer, in the midst of the epidemic, a tomb in the heart of the city was thus opened to receive the body of a stranger, who had died of the fever. *Two weeks after*, it was opened again to receive the body of another stranger, who had also died of the fever. The yard, the street, the vicinity, was filled with the noxious stench; we have seen that gases from the decaying body carry with them the seeds of disease, who can tell how much was sown through that neighborhood by this friendly act? Scientific authority on the danger of these gases is sometimes disputed, and people say—show us when and where persons have been made sick by inhaling them. We give them volumes of such cases—they do not believe them, they demand home evidence. *Tombs and*

*vaults enable us to furnish it*, and by testimony, that embraces scientific knowledge as well as a sad personal experience. Some time ago, Dr. ——— had occasion to assist in removing from a tomb in the city the remains of a friend. On arriving at the place, he found the door had been opened by the sexton, and from the tomb an offensive effluvia was issuing. Though cautioned by the sexton—who must have had experience of the danger—he nevertheless stepped within the place. In an instant or two after inhaling a little of the air within, he was seized with illness so severe as to require aid to stand erect. After a short time he was accompanied to his residence by a friend, when he went immediately to his bed and there remained, suffering under a dangerous disease—a *nervo-typhoid fever*—for five weeks. His impression and opinion coincides with the authorities we have quoted, that this sickness was caused by the inhalation of gases evolved from the putrefaction in the vault. Another case we will mention is still more striking, as exhibiting the dangerous character of these gases. A family in this city determined to build a tomb within a private lot; on completing it, they exhumed the remains of their father who had been dead ten years, presuming there could be no possible annoyance or danger. A member of the family superintended the removal. On reaching the coffin noxious gases were instantly evolved, and it was with considerable difficulty the remains were deposited within the new sepulchre. Before he left the tomb, the gentleman who had superintended the removal was taken violently ill, with distressing pains, faintness and vomiting. He was carried home in this condition and was dangerously sick for several weeks. During the first few days the vomiting was excessive, and on every effort the sufferer would exclaim—“*I taste the putrefaction of my father’s grave.*” This tomb was used two or three times after, but on each occasion sickness attacked those that entered it, and it has been walled up, never more to be used or opened. We have now connected scientific investigation, observation, experience and positive fact, from which we discover, that putrefaction leads to the disengagement of noxious gases, which produce

sickness and death. We have shown that many years must elapse before the dead can be disturbed at all with safety, and that during these years the noxious gases are given off and rise into the air. It is seen that in our city cemeteries the departed do not repose in peace, but that the dead replace each other year after year—that city interments, on the whole, are not decreasing in number, and that great irregularity exists in the mode of interment. Has not enough been shown of indisputable facts, to satisfy every one that “the time has certainly now arrived (if indeed it did not always exist,) when it is very desirable to have no burials within the city,” and for such arrangements for burial to be made as will permit the consistent use of the motto over our dead—“*Requiescat in Pace.*”

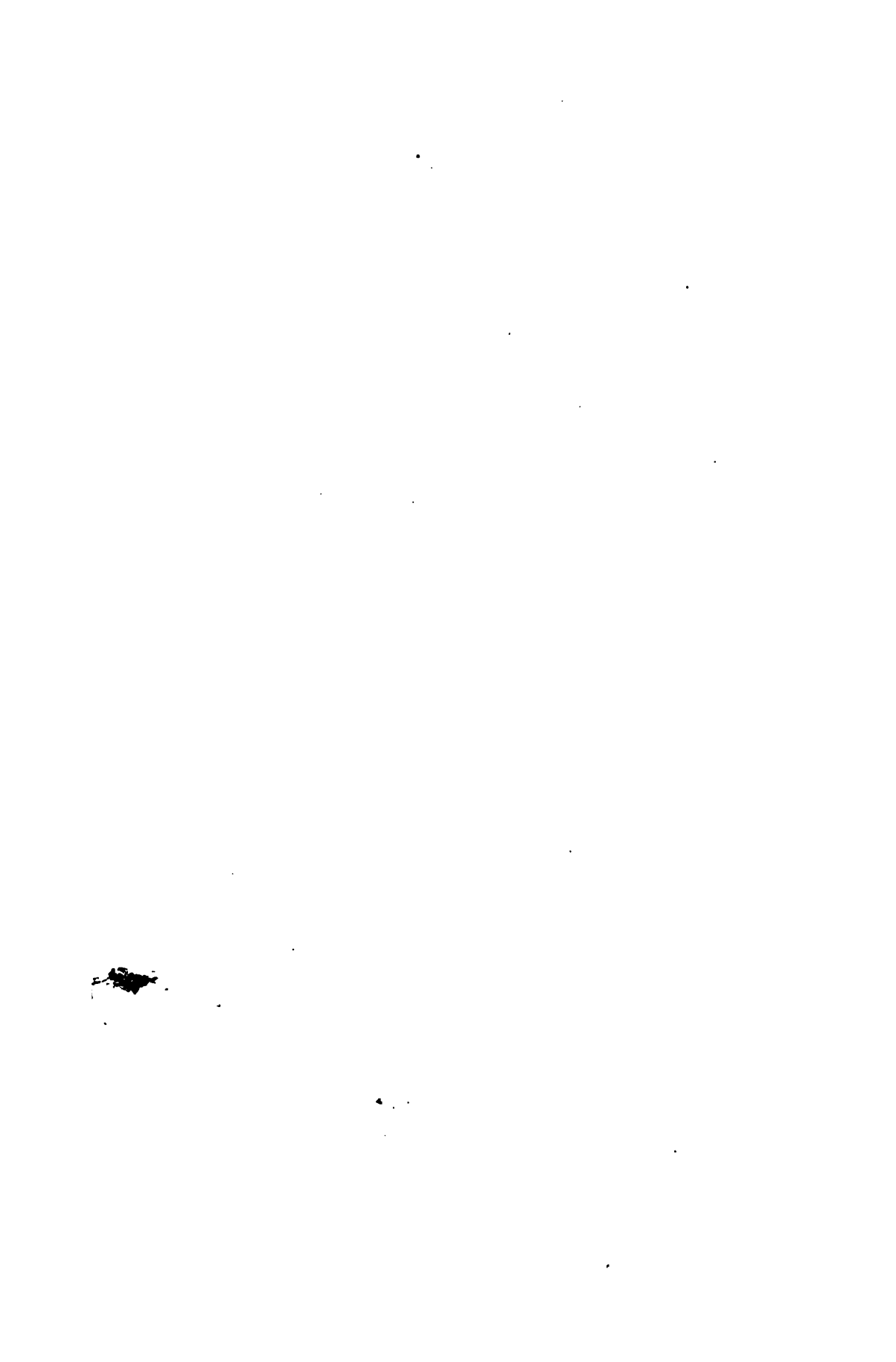
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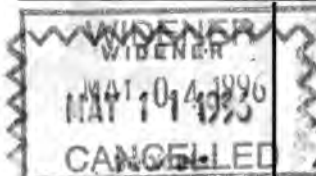




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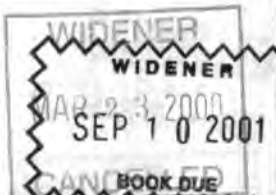
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